

6.4 Open Areas – Without Fire Protection

This section deals with private lands outside of the three (3) FPD's. Presently, there are four (4) major rural areas, within Lincoln County, not included in a Fire Protection District. Two (2) of the major areas are the farming communities of Hidden Valley and Kimama. These areas include an estimated 29,440 acres within Lincoln County, and are located in the extreme southeastern portion of Lincoln County. (Figure 3)

6.4a Condition: Presently, landowners residing within the Hidden Valley/Kimama unprotected areas receive fire protection from the West End FPD located in Paul, Idaho, in neighboring Minidoka County. Through personal interviews with landowners, it was apparent that the majority of landowners residing in the “open areas” (Hidden Valley/ Kimama) are satisfied with their current level of fire protection and expressed no interest in joining a fire protection district. See landowner contact list Appendix A.

This position taken by the private landowners imposes important liability considerations, as the West End Fire Station is the closest protection district (20 miles) vs. (24 miles from Dietrich) and will respond to emergency incidents in Hidden Valley and Kimama areas in a timely manner; however, these Lincoln County open areas are outside the West End's fire protection district.

Major concerns expressed by private landowners are the isolated tracks BLM manages for wildlife, scattered throughout Hidden Valley. (Figure 17) These tracks of native vegetation and moderate to heavy fuel loading require farmers to maintain a firebreak between their crops and wildland, thereby affecting their total crop yield, and it limits their flexibility with crop rotation.

Another major concern in the Kimama area is the increased traffic on the Carey–Kimama road (Figure 18) with the increased in popularity of the new craters of the moon national monument. The Carey-Kimama road should maintained to reduce the risk of roadside fire starts. If the fuels were maintained Carey-Kimama road would make an excellent fire break to stop large wildfires. See list of Hidden Valley/Kimama private landowner interviewed, Appendix A.

From decades of fire protection and suppression action heavy fuels have accumulated along the State Highway 24 and the UPRR Right of Way. Also the BLM manages several forty (40) acre plots in the Hidden Valley area for upland bird habitat. Upon ignition, these areas of concern have the potential to threaten adjoining agriculture and Public Lands.

6.4b Recommendation: A new BLM fireguard station is presently under construction in the Kimama area. (Figure 19) This new facility may lead to increased fire protection possibilities for the Hidden Valley and Kimama open areas. Presently, new BLM fireguard stations established in Rogerson and Carey are considered “multi-agency stations”, which means the local FPD has the opportunity to utilize the new station for structural protection. A request from Lincoln County for this consideration should be taken to the BLM, Shoshone Field Office.

The multi-agency station would increase the fire protection needs of the two major “open areas” within Lincoln County. Also, consideration should be given to the possibility of Lincoln County incorporating these open areas into the Dietrich FPD, or the creation a fourth FPD and the construction of a satellite station in the Hidden Valley and Kimama area. A satellite station, equipped with a structural engine and proper training for local volunteers, would eliminate many fire protection concerns.

If no consideration is given to incorporating Lincoln County’s open areas without fire protection, or placement of a satellite station in the general vicinity, then a Mutual Aid Agreement may improve upon the existing situation of no fire protection. Landowners and FPDs need to develop cooperative and mutual aid agreements. Mutual Aid would allow emergency equipment access to irrigation wells or hand lines.

Another alternative should be expanding existing FPD boundaries to the Lincoln County line. Thereby, including the four (4) major areas without fire protection and many individual home sites scattered throughout the county. If a particular landowner resists incorporation, they should be made aware of the consequences (paid response), and not included in the protection district.

County Commissioners also need to negotiate with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Idaho Department of Transportation (IDT) to promote a demonstration program that will reduce heavy grass and shrubs along respective right-of-ways, in an effort to reduce fire hazard along the interstate and risk of wildfire moving across the highway.

Develop fuel breaks at least 200 feet in width from edge of road to fence line, property boundary or highway right-of-way, along an estimated forty eight (48.0) miles of existing roads in the Hidden Valley and Kimama unprotected areas. (Figure 3)

Figure 17: Hidden Valley BLM isolated tracts



Figure 18: Carey-Kimama Road, (north view)



Figure 19: New Kimama BLM Station (Under Construction)



6.4.1 Additional Lincoln County Open Areas

6.4.1a: Condition: Two (2) additional Lincoln County open areas without fire protection include the Double D Dairy in the southwest corner of the county, and approximately 1460 acres of private and leased state endowment land, located along State Highway 75 in the northern portion of Lincoln County.

Personal interviews were held with the following private landowners: the Double D Dairy, Shoshone Indian Ice Caves, Ice Caves Store, Chad Sluder, Gordon Sorenson, Castle Dairy, and Gene Goold.

Personal interviews revealed that these landowners and proprietors have little interest of being incorporated into a fire protection district. The general feeling shared by each proprietor and property owner is when emergency suppression equipment is located closer and response time decreases, they would petition for incorporation.

The Ice Caves Store (Figure 22) and Shoshone Indian Ice Caves (Figure 21) are surrounded by volcanic lava flows and sagebrush with a thirty five (35) percent canopy cover. The understory consists of annual grass and forbs. A wildfire would burn slowly and erratically through the lava outcrops, however due to the lack of ground cover, and light fuel loading a wildfire would be little or no threat to existing business structures.

The residential homes on the Sluder property is well maintained, with adequate defensible space, (Figure 23), however the equipment yard, in which a number of antique types of machinery is stored has a high level of fuels buildup and corresponding wildfire threat.

Fire protection needs associated with the Sorenson (Figure 24), Castle (Figure 25), and Goold (no picture available) properties are limited to structural needs only. Each parcel of private property is well maintained, has good defensible space, and is surrounded by agricultural ground.

The Double D Dairy (Figure 20) has a unique situation with their agriculture ground located in Jerome County and their dairy barns and stack yards being located in Lincoln County. The Double D Dairy is not included in a FPD, and therefore has no fire protection.

Presently, the owners of Double D Dairy have no interest in petitioning for incorporation into a FPD, even though both the Jerome Rural Fire Department, and the Shoshone City and Rural Fire Department have approached them.

Fire protection needs associated with the Double D Dairy property are limited to structural needs only. Each parcel of private property is well maintained, has good defensible space, and is surrounded by agricultural ground.

6.4.1b Recommendation: If Lincoln County proceeds with the recommendation to expand fire protection districts boundary to the Lincoln County Line. The PD line should not include the private ground in those open areas without fire protection where the residents are unwilling at this time to request incorporation. Additionally, each private landowner should be notified that, when an emergency response to their property is necessary, the closest fire department will respond, however they would be responsible for all suppression costs.

At a minimum, mutual aid agreements with private landowners in all open areas without fire protection should be pursued. A mutual aid agreement may improve upon the existing situation of no fire protection. Landowners and FPDs need to develop both cooperative and mutual aid agreements. This would allow access to irrigation wells or hand lines so emergency response agencies could obtain access to a water refill source for use during emergency responses.

Figure 20. Double D Dairy SW Lincoln County



Figure 21. Shoshone Indian Ice Caves – N. Lincoln County



Figure 22. Ice Caves Store – N. Lincoln County



Figure 23. C. Sluder residence – N. Lincoln County



Figure 24. Gordan and Tracy Sorensen residence – N. Lincoln County



Figure 25. Castle Dairy – N. Lincoln County



6.4c Fire, Structural, and Community Assessments for Lincoln County Open Areas

The following is a summary of the **Fire Hazard Assessment** for the Lincoln County Open Areas. Table 23 Shows the complete results. The two (2) subdivisions in this FPD received a **Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for five (5) out of seven (7) elements for (71.4%)** and a Class B (moderate) fire hazard assessment rating for two (2) out of seven (7) elements for (28.5%).

The **overall Fire Hazard Assessment rating** for the Open Areas is **“low or 1”**. The only element of concern is the buildup of light fuels along roads and adjacent to public land, and the response time of emergency fire equipment.

6.4d Fire Hazard Assessment Attributes:

Vegetation Type – Sagebrush-grassland will be the primary carrier of any ignition to the wildland-urban interface.

Slope – Most slopes within the assessment are 10-30%.

Aspect – The majority of the structures within the assessment area face east.

Elevation – The elevation within the assessment area averages between 4000-4200 feet.

Fuel Type – Fuel types within the assessment area are primarily sagebrush/grass.

Fuel Density – Fuel density within the assessment area is broken moderate fuels with a 20-30% canopy cover.

Fuel Bed Depth – Fuel bed depth within the assessment area light – moderate, averaging 1-3 feet.

Table 24. Fire Hazard Assessment for Lincoln County Open Areas

Subdivision/Parcels	Vegetative Type	Rating Elements					
		Slope	Aspect	Elevation	Fuel Type	Fuel Density	Fuel Bed Depth
Hidden Valley	Sagebrush/grass	A	A	A	B	B	B
Kimama	“	A	A	A	B	B	B
Double D Dairy	“	A	A	A	A	A	A
Shoshone Indian Ice Caves	“	A	A	A	B	B	A
Ice Cave Store	“	A	A	A	B	B	A
Sluder Property	“	A	A	A	B	B	B
Sorensen Property	“	A	A	A	B	B	B
Castle Dairy	“	A	A	A	A	A	A
Goold Property	“	A	A	A	B	B	A

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

6.4e Structural Hazard Assessment

The following is a summary of the **Structural Hazard Assessment** for Lincoln County Open Areas. Table 25 shows the complete results. Overall, the open areas received a **Class A “low-1” fire hazard assessment rating for six (6) out of seven (7) elements for (85.7%)**, and a Class B (medium) for one (1) out of seven (7) elements for (14.2%).

The overall **Structural Hazard rating** for the open areas is **“low-1”**. The most concern shared by most private landowners in the open areas, is the long response time for emergency equipment.

Structural Hazard Assessment Attributes:

Structure Density – The structure density is at least one structure per fifteen (15) acres.

Proximity to fuels – Structures in assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface have an average of forty (40) feet to flammable fuels.

Building Materials – All structures within the assessment area have fire resistant roofs and/or siding.

Survivable Space – 93% of the structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface have improved survivable space around the property.

Roads – Roads within the assessment area are adequate to maintain emergency equipment.

Response Time – Response time to the assessment area is forty (40) minutes or more.

Access – Access to the assessment area is adequate. There are some narrow roads, however turn around space is adequate.

Table 25. Structural Hazard Assessment for Lincoln County Open Areas

Subdivision/Parcels	Rating Elements						
	Structure Density	Proximity Of Fuels	Building Materials	Survivable Space	Roads	Response Time	Access
Hidden Valley	A	B	A	A	A	C	A
Kimama	A	B	A	A	B	C	A
Double D Dairy	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
Shoshone Indian Ice Caves	B	A	B	A	A	C	A
Ice Caves Store	B	A	A	A	A	C	A
Sluder Property	A	B	A	A	A	C	B
Sorensen Property	A	A	A	A	A	C	A
Castle Property	A	A	A	A	B	C	B
Goold Property	A	B	A	A	A	C	A

A(1)=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B(2)=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C(3)=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

6.4f Community Assessment for Open Areas

The following is a summary of the Community Assessment for the Lincoln County Open Areas. Table 25 displays the assessment results. Overall the Open or Unprotected Areas received a Class A (low-1) community assessment rating for one (1) out of twelve (12) elements for (8.3%). A Class B (medium-2) assessment rating for three (3) out of twelve (12) elements for (25%), and a **Class C (high-3) assessment rating for eight (8) out of twelve (12) elements for (66.6%)**.

The overall **Community Assessment rating** for the Open Areas is **“high or 3”** which reflects upon community’s concern of such a long response time for emergency fire equipment.

Table 26. Community Assessment Summary for Lincoln County Open Areas

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A,B, or C)
Community Description	There is a clear line where residential business, and public structures meet wildland fuels. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area.	There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area.	The community generally exists where homes, ranches, and other structures are scattered but adjacent to wildland vegetation.	B
Response Time	Prompt response time to interface areas (? Minutes or less)	Moderate response time to interface area (? Minutes)	Lengthy response time to interface area (? Minutes)	C
Firefighting Capability	Adequate structural fire department. Sufficient personnel, equipment, and wildland firefighting capability and experience.	Inadequate fire department. Limited personnel, and or equipment but with some wildland firefighting experience and training.	Fire department non-existent or untrained and/or equipped to fight wildland fire	C
Water Supply	Adequate supply of fire hydrants and pressure, and/or open water sources (pools, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc.).	Inadequate supply of fire hydrants, or limited pressure. Limited water supply.	No pressure water system available near interface. No surface water available.	C
Local Emergency Operations Group (EOG)	Active EOG. Evacuation plan in place.	Limited participation in EOG. Have some form of evacuation process.	No EOG. No evacuation plan in place.	C
Structure Density	At least one structure per 0-5 acres.	One structure per 5-10 acres.	Less than one structure per 10 acres.	C
Community Planning Practices	County/local laws and zoning ordinances require use of fire safe residential design and adequate ingress/egress of fire suppression resources. Fire department actively participates in planning process.	Local officials have an understanding of appropriate community planning practices for wildfire loss mitigation. Fire department has limited input to fire safe development and planning efforts.	Community standards for fire safe development and protection are marginal or non-existent. Little or no effort has been made in assessing and applying measures to reduce wildfire impact.	C

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A,B, or C)
Fire Mitigation Ordinances, Laws, or Regulations in Place	Have adopted local ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping, building and planning. Fire department actively participates in planning process.	Have voluntary ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping and building practices. Fire department participates in planning process.	No local codes, laws or ordinances requiring fire safe building landscaping or planning processes.	B
Fire Department Equipment	Good supply of structure and wildland fire apparatus and miscellaneous specialty equipment.	Smaller supply of fire apparatus in fairly good repair with some specialty equipment.	Minimum amount of fire apparatus, which is old and in need of repair. None or little specialty equipment.	C
Fire Department Training and Experience	Large, fully paid fire department with personnel that meet NFPA or NWCG training requirements, are experienced in wildland fire, and have adequate equipment.	Mixed fire department. Some paid and some volunteer personnel. Limited experience, training and equipment to fight wildland fire.	Small, all volunteer fire department. Limited training, experience and budget with regular turnover of personnel. Do not meet NFPA or NWCG standards.	C
Community Fire Safe Efforts and programs already in place	Organized and active groups (Fire Dept.) providing educational materials and programs for their community.	Limited interest and participation in educational programs. Fire department does some prevention and public education.	No interest of participation in educational programs. No prevention/education efforts by fire department.	B
Community support and attitudes	Actively supports urban interface plans and actions.	Some participation in urban interface plans and actions.	Opposes urban interface plans and efforts.	C

A(1)=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B(2)=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C(3)=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

7.0 Technical Information to Support Action Plan

This section evaluates important wildland fire-related issues and their relationship to existing conditions throughout Lincoln County. Existing conditions in Lincoln County were determined by: (1) interviewing local, state, and federal officials and county residents; (2) driving the main roads within each fire protection district; (3) determining fuel loads adjacent to roads and determining distance of maintenance needs; (4) reviewing bridge weight limits and needs, and road classifications for accessibility by large firefighting equipment such as tenders and pump trucks; (5) photographing representative structures and determining defensible space, proximity of fire hydrants and other water sources, and adherence to local building codes; and (6) a Wildland Fire Hazard Assessment, Structural Assessment, and Community Assessment has been completed within each fire district.